

TECHNICAL REVIEWER RATING SUMMARY

G-017-B

Commercial Driver Training Program

Submitted by Fort Berthold Community College

Principal Investigator: Dr. Clarice Baker-Big Back

Request for \$62,900; Total Project Costs \$137,106

Duration: 12 months

Rating Category	Weighting Factor	Technical Reviewer		Average Weighted Score
		17B-05	17B-09	
		Rating		
Objective	9	4	3	31.5
Availability	9	4	3	31.5
Methodology	7	3	3	21.0
Contribution	7	4	1	17.5
Awareness	5	3	1	10.0
Background	5	4	4	20.0
Project Management	2	3	3	6.0
Equipment Purchase	2	5	2	7.0
Facilities	2	4	3	7.0
Budget	2	4	3	7.0
Average Weighted Score		188	129	158.5
Maximum Weighted Score				250

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

FUND	X
FUNDING TO BE CONSIDERED	
DO NOT FUND	X

1. *The objectives or goals of the proposed project with respect to clarity and consistency with North Dakota Industrial Commission/Oil and Gas Research Council goals are: 1 – very unclear; 2 – unclear; 3 – clear; 4 – very clear; or 5 – exceptionally clear.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 4)

The objectives and goals of the proposed project are clear and consistent with North Dakota Industrial Commission/Oil and Gas Research Council goals. The proposal is to provide training to 15 trainees who do not have the financial resources to pay the cost of training on their own.

Goals of the North Dakota Industrial Commission/Oil and Gas Research Council include:

- Preserve and create jobs involved in the exploration, production and utilization of North Dakota's oil and gas resources.
- Ensure economic stability, growth, and opportunity in the oil and gas industry

The North Dakota Petroleum Council partnered with the North Dakota Department of Commerce, Department of Career and Technical Education and Williston State College to conduct an Oil and Natural Gas Workforce Needs Assessment. The Final Report was released in the fall of 2006. The Report findings concluded that in order for the Oil and Natural Gas Industry to maintain their project growth and employment levels that between 2,800 and 3,200 new hires would need to be made each and every year for the next four year. One of the highest needs was for CDL Truck Drivers. This study was complete prior to the impact and growth associated with the Bakken Formation. In October of 2008 the www.FindJobsND.com had listings of over 1,300 job postings for Transportation and Material Moving occupations within North Dakota. A majority of these listing were for CDL drivers to support the oil and natural gas industry. The Oil and Natural Gas Industry in North Dakota relies on having access to an available and skilled workforce to meet their current and project employment needs. Adding programs of training that can produce CDL drivers to support the industry is a positive step and proactive response.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 3)

This project will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment with a CDL Drivers License. There is a true shortage of qualified people in this field and a training program would help speed the training process significantly.

2. *With the approach suggested and time and budget available, the objectives are: 1 – not achievable; 2 – possibly achievable; 3 – likely achievable; 4 – most likely achievable; or 5 – certainly achievable.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 4)

Fort Berthold Community College is currently collaborating with Williston State College to provide the CDL training. They have a pool of potential applicants who could participate in the training if funding for the tuition can be secured. Funding to help support applicants for this training has been provided from both the State and Tribal Workforce Investment Act and Tribal TERO funding. Federal Workforce Investment Act funding is limited and has been decreasing for North Dakota due to the low unemployment rate in the State. CDL training, as well as other training, that could assist incumbent workers employed in low wage jobs improve their earnings and career options are not within their reach due to cost of the training. Unfortunately for these individuals there is no other State or Federal funding sources to help them cover the cost of their training.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 3)

The program appears to be in operation already so start-up has already occurred.

3. *The quality of the methodology displayed in the proposal is: 1 – well below average; 2 – below average; 3 – average; 4 – above average; or 5 – well above average.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 3)

The methodology of providing the training through a combination of classroom and hands on driving experience behind the wheels of a semi-trailer rig is standard for this type of training.

The proposal did not elaborate on the course content or curriculum of the CDL training or the safety training program to be developed. The marketing piece to attract individuals into the program was not clearly laid out other than the initial public meeting to determine interest.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 3)

No comment

4. *The scientific and/or technical contribution of the proposed work to specifically address North Dakota Industrial Commission/Oil and Gas Research Council goals will likely be: 1 – extremely small; 2 – small; 3 – significant; 4 – very significant; or 5 – extremely significant.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 4)

The technical contribution of the proposal would specifically address North Dakota Industrial Commission/Oil and Gas Research Council goals of:

- 1) Preserve and create jobs involved in the exploration, production and utilization of North Dakota's oil and gas resources; and
- 2) Ensure economic stability, growth, and opportunity in the oil and gas industry

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 1)

Nothing scientific about truck driving.

FBCC Response

Aside from the flip tone of the comment, our major objection is that it ignores the intent of the criterion—namely, to assess the extent to which our proposal addresses the NDIC/OGRC goals. Reviewer 05 notes (correctly, in our view) that the proposal specifically addresses the goals of job creation and preservation in the oil industry, and of fostering economic health in the industry. Lack of drivers creates a bottleneck for the industry and if the oil cannot be transported out, or equipment cannot be trucked in, then jobs in all sectors of the industry are lost.

5. *The principal investigator's awareness of current research activity and published literature as evidenced by literature referenced and its interpretation and by the reference to unpublished research related to the proposal is: 1 – very limited; 2 – limited; 3 – adequate; 4 – better than average; or 5 – exceptional.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 3)

Although specific research (such as the North Dakota Oil and Natural Gas Workforce Needs Assessment, Job Service North Dakota Employment projections, and current job postings for CDL truck drivers listed on the FindJobsND.com web site) are not referenced in the proposal, it is evident that the principal investigator has an understanding of the shortage of and the critical importance of access to CDL drivers by employers who are engaged in the Oil and Natural Gas Industry in North Dakota.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 1)

The nature of the application does not require it.

FBCC Response

This is a contradictory statement and rating. If this type of application does not require an awareness of current research activity, then why should a lack of same give a low mark? More

to the point, FBCC provided evidence of our knowledge of such pertinent issues as the shortage of drivers, the safety issues posed by under-qualified drivers, and the effects on the industry of such shortages.

6. *The background of the investigator(s) as related to the proposed work is: 1 – very limited; 2 – limited; 3 – adequate; 4 – better than average; or 5 – exceptional.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 4)

The background of the investigator as related to the proposed work is supported by the fact that Fort Berthold Community College is already successfully collaborating with Williston State College in delivery of CDL training at their facility. The proposal is to continue and expand the program by bringing in additional trainees who are unable to afford the tuition costs associated with the training.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 4)

All members of the Advisory Board have good experience in the Employment/Workforce training field and would most certainly have the expertise to facilitate this program.

7. *The project management plan, including a well-defined milestone chart, schedule, financial plan, and plan for communications among the investigators and subcontractors, if any, is: 1 – very inadequate; 2 – inadequate; 3 – adequate; 4 – very good; or 5 – exceptionally good.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 3)

A project manager will be assigned to directly track all information and reporting requirements related to the proposal. Fort Berthold Community College will provide all financial information and reports through the Grant Department within their Business Office. A review of the program will be held at the College's monthly curriculum meetings.

All activities are projected to be completed between November 1, 2008 and October 31, 2009. The proposal did not include milestone charts.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 3)

Because this program is part of the existing FBCC curriculum they should have adequate personnel in place to handle the tracking of progress and reporting to the Industrial Commission/Oil and Gas Research Council.

8. *The proposed purchase of equipment is: 1 – extremely poorly justified; 2 – poorly justified; 3 – justified; 4 – well justified; or 5 – extremely well justified. (Circle 5 if no equipment is to be purchased.)*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 5)

No equipment is being purchased

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 2)

The program already exists and there is a lack of interest in the program unless the participants' tuition is paid by others. This application is primarily for tuition & travel for students.

FBCC Response

This rating contradicts the instructions (Circle 5 if no equipment is to be purchased.) given above. As reviewer 5 notes, no equipment is being purchased. Further, the comment does not address the criterion.

9. *The facilities and equipment available and to be purchased for the proposed research are: 1 – very inadequate; 2 – inadequate; 3 – adequate; 4 – notably good; or 5 – exceptionally good.*

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 4)

Fort Berthold Community College is providing classroom and training space, office furniture, phone, computer service for the project manager and project instructor, and access to projection systems for the classes.

The CDL trainees will have access to the use of a semi-trailer rig to provide actual hands on training and experience plus use of simulate safety emergencies to train in both coping with and preventing such occurrences.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 3)

The facility they have would suffice and it is my opinion that the portion of the funds requested is only through the FBCC funds.

10. The proposed budget "value"¹ relative to the outlined work and the financial commitment from other sources is of: 1 – very low value; 2 – low value; 3 – average value; 4 – high value; or 5 – very high value. (See below)

Reviewer 017B-05 (Rating: 4)

The proposed tuition cost is comparable to costs being charged for this type of training by Williston State College. The projected cost for the Project Manager and the Safety and Permit Instructor is reasonable and necessary to insure success of the program.

59% of the cost of the project is coming from sources other than the Industrial Commission sources.

Reviewer 017B-09 (Rating: 3)

Less than 50/50 and no industry support.

FBCC Response

This is simply not true; only 41% of the support is requested from the NDIC/OGRC. It IS true that the industry is providing no direct support, but we appreciate their interest in hiring our graduates.

Section C. Overall Comments and Recommendations:

Please comment in a general way about the merits and flaws of the proposed project and make a recommendation whether or not to fund.

Reviewer 17B-05 (FUND)

I would strongly recommend funding for this proposal. Fort Berthold Community College has taken steps to reach out and collaborate with the State's two year colleges to help address the need for CDL drivers for the Oil and Natural Gas Industry. Currently the only CDL courses available in North Dakota are through the Southeast Skills and Technology Center in Fargo North Dakota. This is an eight week course which for most unless you reside in Fargo requires not only the tuition cost of \$3,900 but room and per diem for the time attending the course. The other CDL course is through Williston State College who is collaborating with Fort Berthold Community College in the delivery of the CDL training to the Fort Berthold American Indian Reservation.

Affordability of training is the single most important barrier that prevents individuals who are unemployed, underemployed or working in low wage jobs from pursuing short-term training that could qualify them for the high-demand opportunities available with North Dakota employers. There are not available State funds to assist these individuals and Federal Funds which are available are limited and diminishing.

Reviewer 17B-09 (DO NOT FUND)

I would not recommend funding for this program. The request is for tuition for individual students and as such they will not be able to guarantee the job status or the quality of work of the individuals.

FBCC Response

TERO, Voc Rehab, and 477 will track job status and quality; this is part of TERO's mandate.

I do believe the program has a lot of merit but I do not feel that funding tuition through the Oil and Gas Research Council is appropriate. There are other avenues and programs already in existence that are better suited for this purpose.

FBCC Response

This is not correct. The State has no funds available for this purpose, and federal sources are non-existent given the economic crisis.

My opinion is that there would have to be too many conditions placed on the actual trainees to be able to justify the expense. (i.e. repayment for all students that do not maintain gainful employment with 1 employer for a period of time not less than 2 years.) Their idea is to assist in supplying jobs for individuals more than the betterment of the industry as a whole.

FBCC Response

Again, this is supposition, not reality. OF COURSE we are concerned with jobs for our graduates, but the overall health of the industry is important to the entire Fort Berthold community—it provides both primary and secondary jobs, pumps money into the local economy, and gives our people the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes with gainful employment in an essential field. Also, to assume that we do not appreciate the opportunity to contribute to lessening US dependence on Mid-East oil, or keeping fuel prices manageable, sadly underestimates both our patriotism and our common sense.

Again, the program is a great one and needs to continue. This is just not the right place for funding of this nature in my opinion.